21 Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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MARKETING BEFORE 1825

Until the British encouraged sundry traders from the plains to establish a weekly bazaar in Ootacamund around the year 1825,[8] there was no market-place on the plateau itself, and coinage did not circulate much among Badagas. Nevertheless they did participate slightly in the market economy of the plains early in the last century. Depending on the position of their villages some went down the eastern slopes to the market of Ka:ramuḍu (in Tamil, Ka:ramaḍai), others chose a route down the northern slopes to the Mysore town of Guṇḍuḷupe:te and those in Kundena:ḍu went southward (as in Finicio's day) to Surdepatti, a small market in the westernmost corner of the Coimbatore Plain.[9] Apart from visiting Ka:ramuḍu (which they called Koṅgu, meaning 'plains') they never had any occasion to travel extensively on the Coimbatore Plain. Guṇḍuḷupe:te used simply to be called Pet: this meant 'a place where people gather together', hence a market; or according to some, 'a place where cattle gather'. For a long time it was a major cattle market in southern Mysore.

Early each March the Kanarese Chettis and other people of Ka:ramuḍu held a festival to honour the god Raṅgana:tan, after which there was a large cattle fair and general market.[10] A delegation of Badaga men from villages in the eastern part of the Nilgiris attended that festival every year.[11] They would first help drag the chariot of the deity and then would barter goods for coinage and whatever else they needed. There seems to have been no fixed date for the annual visit of more westerly villagers to Guṇḍuḷupe:te, but it coincided roughly with the Ka:ramuḍu expedition. In both cases the Badagas obtained provisions for their main harvest festival, the Great Festival,[12] which falls in March or April, and salt for the ceremonial feeding of their cattle in March. In Guṇḍuḷupe:te Lingayats could also buy personal *lingas* at the monastery. In view of the long walk from these markets and the 1500 m. ascent, it is not surprising that the items bought were small and fairly valuable.

All three trading expeditions were organized on the same principle. Permission to go was first obtained from the village headmen, then preliminary arrangements were made as to who would go and the time of their departure. The Badaga headmen would then send a message to neighbouring Kota headmen, thus giving Kotas an opportunity to join the party, for the Kotas did not

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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organize their own expeditions. Todas sometimes also joined, trading clarified butter and honey for tobacco, trinkets and cloth. Their clarified butter was much appreciated in the plains and was 'transported great distances, even as far as Bombay' (Hough, 1829, 72). The trading party would be at least twenty-strong, and sometimes hundreds went together—after carefully taking off all their valuables. This arrangement was important to the participants because of the dangers, real or imaginary, which they could expect as they passed through steep jungle tracks infested by tigers, elephants, wild buffalo, wolves, brigands and Kurumba sorcerers.

Until the 1830s certain Badagas, generally commune headmen, habitually walked once a year to the fort at Dannaika Ko:ṭe, below the eastern slopes.[13] The Nilgiri Plateau formed a part of the Dannaika Ko:ṭe *taluk* (revenue division) from Tippu Sultan's administration up to 1830. This was a convention important only for the collection of land revenue from the Badagas and Kotas. Each farmer was assessed a fixed rate by the officers, dependent on the total rather than the cultivated area he held; the rate did not decrease if some fields remained uncultivated one year. Traditions mention occasional visits by Tippu's officers to extract payment from the unwilling villagers (Metz, 1864, 119; Grigg, 1880, 312, 325; Emeneau, 1946, 255). In 1799, after Tippu was killed, the plateau passed into the hands of the East India Company by the Treaty of Seringapatam, and for over twenty years the British continued to collect Nilgiri revenues at Dannaika Ko:ṭe. Their estimates were now based not on acreage but on a farmer's wealth. Each year therefore the headmen carried their collected taxes down in coin. While at the fort they could also visit the nearby market towns of Sattiyamaṅgaḷa and Sirumuge (Metz, 1864, 5).

Very likely one of the reasons for the trading expeditions was to sell enough of the new harvest and other produce to get the coinage needed for the tax payment, although this could in part be paid with opium (Francis, 1908, 290; Price 1908, 224). Coinage was scarcely in circulation on the plateau at this time, especially since there was no market there until 1825. Coins had, however, found a ceremonial use. Ward (1821, lxxiii; cf. Rivers, 1906, 361–362) mentions gifts of a quarter or half rupee to Todas on the occasion of Badaga weddings. Rupee coins also reached the Todas, presumably from their transactions with Badagas and from the expeditions, for a number of the coins still displayed in Toda funerial ritual are East India Company silver rupees of the late-eighteenth century.

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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their Nilgiri acquisitions for further produce to take up to the hills.

According to modern Badaga informants their forebears did not use cash at the Ootacamund market during the first two decades of its existence. They exchanged the products of their own lands for the foodstuffs brought up by Chettis. In this way the Nilgiri Plateau was exporting a variety of goods to Ka:ramuḍu and its environs, especially clarified butter, onions, honey, coriander, opium and millet hay.

The initial period of barter in the bazaar passed as the town acquired a few regular shops. Later in the nineteenth century coinage came into use in the market, now open every day, and a government superintendent fixed the day's prices (Ouchterlony, 1848, 72; Price, 1908, 187). One could even borrow money there at 2 or 3% per month interest (depending on the security). Monday and Tuesday in Ootacamund, Thursday in Sirumuge, Friday in Ka:ramuḍu and Saturday in Me:ṯṯupa:ḷaya are however still called 'shandy days',[21] and it is still customary for Badagas to visit the Nilgiri towns on Monday, their weekly holiday, and to send truckloads of farm produce to Me:ṯṯupa:ḷaya or to Ka:ramuḍu each Friday. The transition to exclusive use of coinage in the market took a very long time, for as recently as 1924 Gaymard was able to remark that when they made their weekly trips to town some Badagas did not carry a purse but instead a basket or sackful of grain which they would exchange there for salt, pimentos, utensils and cloth (Gaymard, 1924, 2–3).

ITINERANT TRADERS ON THE PLATEAU

Both before and after these town bazaars were established the Badagas maintained another kind of link with the lowland economy. Chettis from villages lying directly east of the Nilgiris used to (and still do) come up onto the plateau once a month on foot for petty trading. Badagas call them Regional Chettis *(na:ḍu ceṭṭi)*, in reference perhaps to the restricted range of each man's trading itinerary. Although living in a Tamil-speaking area their native tongue is Kannada. Their settlements in and near the towns of Sirumuge, Me:ṯṯupa:ḷaya and Ka:ramuḍu are concerned with petty trade, weaving and agriculture. The Chetti and his family weave cloth in their home for the Badagas; and until the advent of the Ootacamund bazaar they were the regular source for cloth

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(651) cash wage (Grigg, 1880, 34, 471; see above, pp. 149, 152).
(654) Greatly increased contact with markets and with Europeans
(434) provided the impetus towards full participation in the cash economy, yet this transition took a century to complete. For the
178 vast majority the basic requirements of food, goods and services
[177] continued to be provided either by their own efforts or by their Toda, Kota and Kurumba associates. The itinerant Chetti trader continued to make monthly visits, as he still does. From 1825 onwards Badagas could visit local markets on the plateau for what they had previously bought in Gunḍulupe:te and Ka:ramuḍu, but they never sold very much in the markets and thus rarely had
(442) spare cash to spend. In the early days of cash-crop farming very few Badagas had enough knowledge or personal contacts to arrange the bulk sale of their produce in a distant market. They used to sell their crops instead to a broker in the Nilgiris, until it became known that a farmer who could find a market and negotiate a sale by himself would make bigger profits. An important motivation was the desire to acquire consumer goods that were now becoming available on a scale and in a variety
(342) never before known to the Badagas. Later in the nineteenth century there is evidence of increasing affluence which found expression in the shift from thatched to tiled rooves. '... in 1871 only 1,914 houses out of the 13,922 in the district were tiled; whereas now [1908] tiles are the rule ... in Badaga villages' (Francis, 1908, 130, compare Shortt & Ouchterlony, 1868, 58;
● (432) Grigg, 1880, 29, 225; 'Geofry', 1881, 132). For the farming family engaged in marketing their crops, cash was necessarily the only medium of exchange, and much of their foodstuffs had to be
(291) bought in the town bazaar. A great variety of items was also being purchased, the most obvious of which were new clothes: in the 1890s men first began to sport European-style shirts and jackets, and in the 1930s women started to wear coloured *sa:ris* (B.E.M.S., 1897, no. 58, 90; Hockings, 1979a).

We may say that their commitment to the cash economy was complete by about 1930, in which year most Badagas permanently severed their traditional exchange relationship with the Kotas. This from the Badaga point of view was an advantageous move, for it allowed them to buy pottery, ropes and metal goods in the bazaar at a lower price than the Kotas commanded, and without delays. While the Kotas had not been receiving cash, the traditional dole of grain they were given at each harvest was becoming

3: Hockings E-5 (1962-1963) 1968
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121 the stream, the cattle shed, and the hearth. Furthermore, the participants in
716 this ceremony do all they can to insure that they are in a state of purity,
and that they do nothing to cause a mishap during this particular day.

Let us now examine these points in more detail. The requirements of
783 ritual purity and bodily cleanliness are a *sine qua non* for the performance
of any ceremony. If a man does not approach the gods with the knowledge
that he has done all that he can to be in a pure state, he has little hope that
his prayers will be answered. In pre-British days, when the salt had to be
715 purchased in the plains below, it received special treatment from the mo-
● 437 ment of purchase onward to insure that it would not become polluted
439 before the ceremony. The men who were to carry the salt up the mountain
439 slopes were not to carry anything else; contact with ordinary foodstuffs
783 would pollute this particular salt. The annual trading expeditions were
normally timed so as to fall a few weeks before the salt-giving ceremony.
Nowadays a Badaga simply buys his own salt in the town market and
brings it home without special ritual precautions.

High in the roof of each cattle shed are shelves on which various dairy
231 articles are stored. The man who brings the salt home is supposed to take it
778 straight to the cattle shed and place it on one of these shelves; he must not
783 bring it directly into his house, even though he will later have to do so
when the ceremony is about to begin. It is felt that the salt would become
polluted in the house if it were brought into an unpurified room where
sexual activity has occurred. The cattle shed, though not considered a temple
like the Toda dairy, is a pure and sacred place because milk is stored
783 there. When the salt is finally brought into each purified house for powder-
ing, it is whisked around the mortar with the help of a freshly cut twig
796 of wild *'hubbe* (also used for loosening any salt that remains on the bottom
(824) of the basket). The Badagas have two kinds of broom, one for indoor use
and one for outside; but both are considered impure because of what they
have come in contact with, and so cannot be used for sweeping the salt
(412) around while it is being powdered. The used part of the *'hubbe* branch is
(783) thrown away after this, and the unused remainder is placed on top of the
salt. From the time of purchase onward, this salt is always carried in a
special basket kept only for this purpose.

It is not only the salt that must be kept in a ritually pure state; the
783 man selected to perform the ceremony on behalf of each household is also
under certain restrictions. From the day of the new moon until after the
salt has been given to the cattle this man must not shave, have sexual re-
lations, cut his finger or toe nails, or stay overnight anywhere other than
in his own home. By observing all these prohibitions he is believed to build
(765) up a state of personal purity. (Were a man to cut his hair and shave, it
would suggest he had recently attended a funeral and was still in the
inauspicious state of mourning for a deceased relative.) The culmination
of this spiritual preparation comes on the night preceding the ceremony,
when he must sleep alone on a sack on the earthen floor, wearing cotton
and without any other bedding.

(354) Early the following morning the house has to be purified too. After the

3: Hockings E-5 (1962-1963) 1968
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But no great change has come in salt-giving and the other important rituals of either the Badagas or the Todas. Indeed, only one general change is apparent in recent performances of the traditional ceremonies: they are done with a minimum of wasted time. Now that Badagas and even some Todas have become involved in the marketing economy, they have less time to spend idly, since time now means income. They tend to perform ritual acts with some haste, and they do not always feel concerned if a minor item in the ritual sequence is altogether omitted from a particular performance. Public opinion still favors as authentic a performance as possible, however, for the relationship between the continued performance of the rituals and the continuance of the social order is even today believed to be a real and crucial one.

Wallace's contention that rituals do not have an information function has, we hope, been qualified by this paper. The kind of information which a ritual such as salt-giving presents is information not available from any other source, whether mass media or traditional oral channels. Neither government nor gossip can reassure a community on the matter of its continued existence as a community; only the periodic re-enactment of roles and the reassertion of traditional values in the indigenous ceremonies of a culture can give Badagas, Todas, and other rural communities the security of knowing that their own particular way of life is both persistent and worthwhile.

NOTES

1. I am indebted to the American Institute of Indian Studies for a fellowship which enabled me to do field research there in 1962-63. The present paper has been written with the help of a grant from the Chancellor's Committee on International and Comparative Studies, University of California at Los Angeles. I am also grateful to M. N. Thesingh, a Badaga Lingayat who provided much of the material, and to John Hitchcock for his helpful criticism.

2. Terracing of slopes and the fragmentation of fields through divided inheritance have resulted, since the 1930s, in fields being too small to plough.

3. Numbering 85,463 persons in the 1961 Census.

4. During the past fifty years some hamlets have included the salt-giving ceremony in their sowing festival. This is convenient because it saves some time and expense on preparations; yet the two ceremonies remain quite distinct from one another.

5. Large groups of Badagas and Kotas used to go together to the market town of Gundlupet in southern Mysore, or to Karamadai, near Coimbatore. They carried hay, honey, opium, and clarified butter with them, and bartered these for salt, crude sugar, rice, coconut, tobacco, and trinkets.

6. Initially trade in the Ootacamund bazaar was handled through barter, but by about 1840 cash had become the general medium.

7. Called *'uppu kuk'ke,* "salt basket," this is made of cane by the Todas, stands about nine inches high (including the loop handle), and is smeared inside and out with cow dung.

8. The term *'hubbe* is used for six species of Leguminosae found at varying altitudes on the Nilgiri Hills. These are (1) the hill forest indigo; (2) the New Spain senna; (3) the tick trefoil; (4) the bell pea or Chinese pagoda tree; (5) *Dumasia villosa;* and (6) mountain downy senna.

9. Otherwise known as bastard mango or honeysweet tree.

241 has greatly improved, it is worth noting, because the state government has made loans available on relatively easy terms for the purpose of having field terraces constructed.

Because of terracing in many places, and widespread subdivision, fields are often so small that it would be markedly inefficient to plow them at any time (478) (Ranga 1934: 12-13; Vivekanandam Pillai 1937: 249). For the past 25 years, therefore, the plow and oxen have ceased to be used in the Nilgiri Hills. Much of the (466) work-load formerly carried by oxen is now taken by the spades of cheap migrant laborers from the plains: men work for daily wages of Rs. 1.75, equivalent to about 35¢ U.S., and women for about 30¢.

While the profits from potato, tea and coffee are very much higher per 426 acre than those from the traditional grain crops, the risks are also much higher. 414 Not only does a farmer need ready cash to buy seed or cuttings, fertilizer and labor, but he may need cash to feed his family if disease ruins the crop for one (651) season. Here the cooperative societies set up by the state government have helped the Badagas greatly. Both short- and long-term loans are available, against land or house securities, for all members of the societies (Vivekanandam Pillai 1937: 249). The societies have thus gone far in protecting Badagas from the high interest-rates of private money-lenders; some societies even help farmers by supplying seeds, fertilizers, and modern implements at cost prices.

Marketing

Traditionally the Badagas, Kotas and Todas occupied a very peripheral 115 position in a market economy: before the British reached the Nilgiris annual trading 437 expeditions to the market at Gundlupet, in Mysore, or to KIramadai, were the (437) source for the few requirements not otherwise available in the Hills. Such

requirements were mainly salt, sugar, tobacco and a few trinkets. Cloth might either be obtained at the market or would be brought up into the Nilgiri villages from the Coimbatore Plain by an itinerant Chetti trader (Ward 1821: lxv). The establishment of a bazaar in Ootacamund during the 1820's, and later of others in Coonoor, Wellington, Kotagiri, Ketti and Manjūr, made consumer goods available to the Badagas on a scale and in a variety never before known to them. The desire to acquire some of these new items was presumably one factor in the drive towards greater participation in the cash economy.

Yet the transition took a century to complete. All of the basic requirements for food, goods and services continued to be provided either by the efforts of the Badagas themselves or by their Toda, Kota and Kurumba associates. From the 1820's onwards the Badagas attended the local markets for what they had previously bought in Gundlupet or Kāramaḍai -- salt, sugar, tobacco and trinkets -- but they never sold very much in the markets, and so they rarely had much cash to spend. With the First World War, however, changes in their marketing practices became more apparent. The crucial demand for vegetables to feed the many European troops in India, Burma, Malaya and Ceylon stimulated the change in crops that we have described above (pp. 94-99): Badagas began exporting potatoes and other vegetables to these remote places, and some made handsome profits (Francis 1908: 167).

The cash that came in from this new venture was spent in a great variety of ways. The most obvious was in buying new clothes: in the 1920's men first began to sport European-style shirts and jackets, and in the 1930's women first started to wear colored saris. A few of the more resourceful men invested their incomes in more land or houses, thus laying a stable foundation for future genera-